

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A splittable composite fiber comprising at least two thermoplastic resin components, wherein said composite fiber has a diameter ≥ 40 microns, wherein said composite fiber is capable of being split into at least two fibers each having a diameter ≤ 30 microns, and wherein said split fibers have greater elongation to break values than fibers of the same size that are obtained by direct spinning.
2. The split fibers obtained by splitting the splittable composite fiber of Claim 1.
3. The splittable composite fiber of Claim 1 wherein the at least two thermoplastic resin components are selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters, polyamides, and copolymers and mixtures thereof.
4. The splittable composite fiber of Claim 3 wherein the at least two thermoplastic resin components comprise polypropylene as a first component and polyethylene as a second component.
5. A nonwoven web comprising the splittable composite fibers of Claim 1.
6. A nonwoven web comprising the splittable composite fibers of Claim 4.
7. A laminate comprising the nonwoven web of Claim 5.
8. A disposable absorbent article comprising the nonwoven web of Claim 5.
9. A disposable absorbent article comprising the laminate of Claim 7.
10. The splittable composite fiber of Claim 1 wherein said fiber has a cross-section selected from the group consisting of side by side, segmented pie, hollow segmented pie, segmented ribbon, tipped multilobal, and mixtures thereof.
11. The splittable composite fiber of Claim 10 wherein said fiber cross-section is selected from the group consisting of segmented pie, hollow segmented pie, and mixtures thereof.
12. The splittable composite fiber of Claim 11 wherein said fiber cross-section is a hollow segmented pie.

13. The splittable composite fiber of Claim 1 wherein the fiber has a shape selected from the group consisting of round, elongated, multilobal, and mixtures thereof.
14. The splittable composite fiber of Claim 13 wherein said fiber shape is round.
15. The splittable composite fiber of Claim 14 wherein said fiber cross-section is hollow segmented pie.
16. The splittable composite fiber of Claim 15 wherein the at least two thermoplastic resin components comprise polypropylene as a first component and polyethylene as a second component.
17. The split fibers obtained by splitting the splittable composite fiber of Claim 4.
18. The split fibers obtained by splitting the splittable composite fiber of Claim 12.
19. The split fibers of Claim 2 wherein said split fibers are obtained from the splittable composite fiber by a process selected from the group consisting of stretching, hydroentangling, needling, aqueous treatment, chemical treatment, thermal treatment, and mixtures thereof.
20. The nonwoven web of Claim 5 wherein said nonwoven is bonded by a process selected from the group consisting of thermal point bonding, through-air bonding, hydroentangling, ultrasonic bonding, and mixtures thereof.